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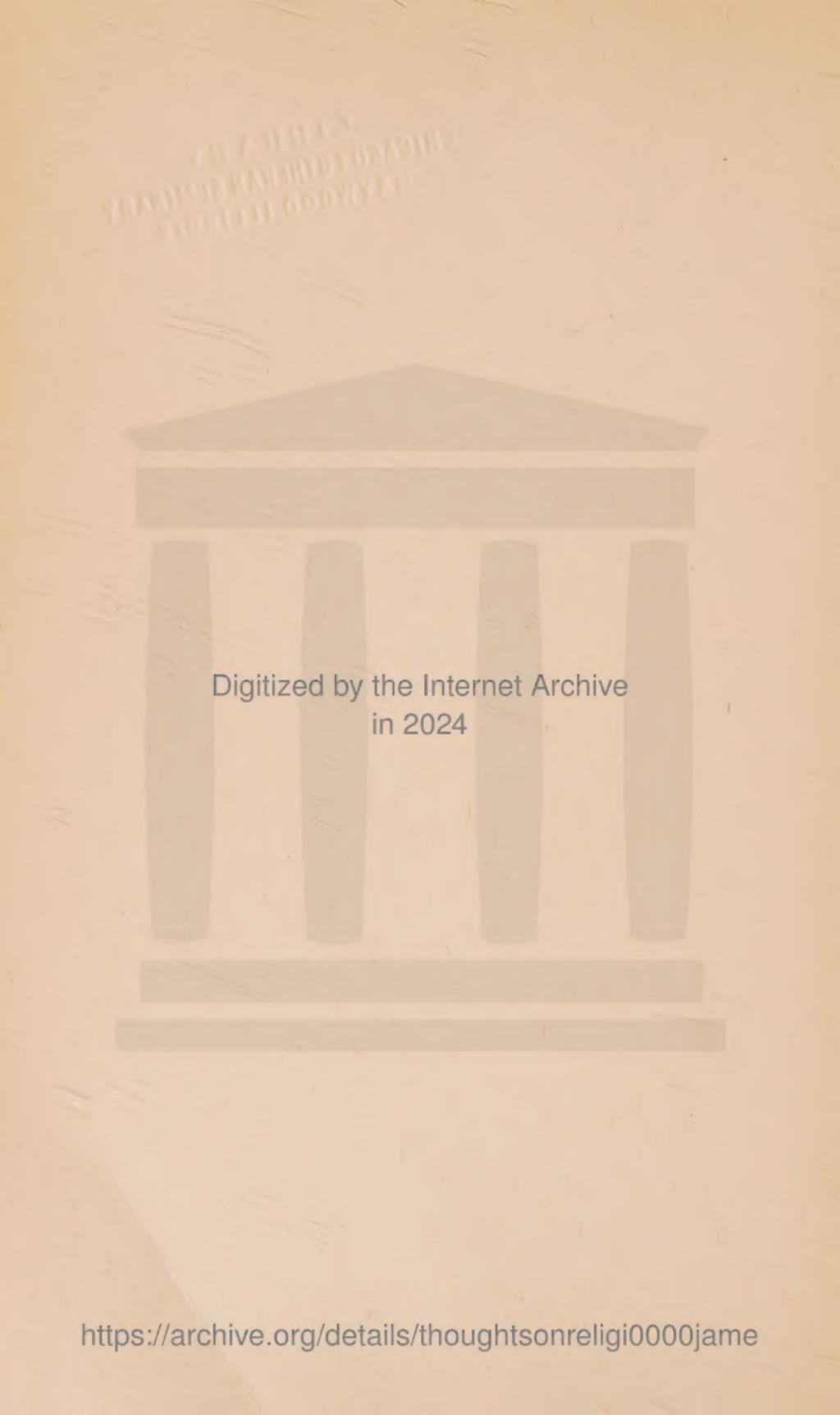
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THOUGHTS ON RELIGION
AND MORALITY

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THOUGHTS
ON
RELIGION AND MORALITY
BY
JAMES EDDY



*Fear not death
The same wise and beneficent Power
that gave you birth
presides equally at your death
TRUST IN GOD*

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James Eddy

JAMES EDDY

JAMES EDDY came from a sturdy, strongly-marked stock ; descended from one William Eddy, Vicar of St. Dunstan's Church, Cranbrook, England, who died in 1616.

Two sons of this clergyman, who is spoken of by his contemporaries as a most virtuous man and successful pastor, came to this country in 1630. From these two, John and Samuel Eddy, have sprung a numerous family, justifying in a striking degree the Saxon meaning of the name Eddy—“Prosperity.”

The family throughout was notable for its fine, strong physique, its large households of many sons, its sound sense and thrifty management of affairs, its clean and virtuous living, and its exceptional religious bent.

James Eddy illustrated many of these family traits in a marked degree. His sound

JAMES EDDY

mind in a sound body gave him seeming youth at eighty years, and kept the balance of powers until his death at eighty-two. His industry, exceptional executive power, thrift, and business capacity, made him easily successful in affairs. His excellent understanding, his pure and strong moral nature, and his kind heart made him a trusted counselor and useful citizen. And that religious tendency, which, from the Vicar of Dunstan down, made so many Eddys ministers, became in him the most essential and peculiar endowment of character.

Never a specialist in reform, furthest possible from the “hobby rider” of one idea, and always condemning the neglect of near duties for foreign philanthropies, he was never indifferent to the great currents of moral progress which sweep over society. To do the nearest kindness and help the nearest friend was the habit of his life. His influence was steadily on the side of the known and accepted virtues. And although

JAMES EDDY

his quick mind and speculative tendency could not fail to be attracted, at times, toward the swift-changing theories of life which the “transcendental period” spread before the new world, he was thoroughly conservative of many “good old ways.” In the latter part of his life, however, although still inclining toward personal philanthropies rather than impersonal reforms, he felt more keenly the need of bettering the conditions of mankind in order to permanently better individual lives.

It is much to say of any life, as we may truthfully of his, “this was a true and earnest, an upright and loyal soul, and the world is better for its influence.” It is more to be able to feel, as hope and affection bid us respecting James Eddy, that his deep spiritual yearning “to widen the skirts of Light” shall bless many who knew him not on earth.

DEDICATION

Believing it to be a duty to make known and dedicate to humanity all of our honest thought which we consider would advance, even in a slight degree, the well-being of mankind, I so dedicate this little volume of guiding principles in religion and morality. My first feeling in this dedication of what are to me the best and highest thoughts upon God and our relations to Him, is naturally toward my own children, to whom our Divine Father has tied my heart with cords of love and affection.

And after them sweet memories of my deceased parents flit through my mind; those parents who were the honored agents of God in giving me life, and who never betrayed the trust reposed in them, but gave to their children honestly and earnestly the best education in religious and moral truth which they were fitted at that time to impart: as, with equal sincerity and earnestness, their son presents in this book, which he dedicates to their memory, his own best knowledge of our relations with God and with each other. I feel a desire also to dedicate my thoughts as expressed in these pages to my family kindred, and to all my friends

DEDICATION

and acquaintances by whom I have had the advantage to be known.

I dedicate this little volume also to the charitable consideration of all moral and religious teachers, and to all thoughtful people throughout the world, feeling satisfaction in the hope that a few readers may find herein some kernels of truth to add to their own earnest and honest convictions in regard to our highest duties.

And lastly, using the freedom with which I feel myself to be endowed, I would reverently, gratefully, lovingly, with all honor dedicate my honest thought to our Divine Father, who in His noble disinterestedness, asks from us no homage, no sacrifice for Himself, but only desires the well-being of all His creatures.

I believe that each and all have the right to exercise freedom in expressing, by speech and in writing, their convictions of Truth and Duty.

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THOUGHTS ON RELIGION
AND MORALITY

THOUGHTS ON RELIGION AND MORALITY

. . .

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND OUR RELATIONS TO HIM.

MAN'S YEARNING AND GROPING AFTER GOD

 **A**s an infant child, awakening in a dark night, full of affectionate instincts extends its little arms and gropes to find its mother, who is its all in all, so through the centuries has the human race groped to find its God; conscious that on some great being we each and all depend for life, and for all that makes life's value. All religions are born of this yearning after God, this desire to find the source of life, and of all its happy experiences; and to bring that source nearer to human consciousness. But since the human race has been indeed like an infant groping in the darkness of ignorance and superstition, not truly seeing its divine parent, it has imagined in a nightmare of terror many horrible and false ideals of God.

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Man now yearns to know a God who is the God of all perfection, of all knowledge and love. He yearns to know the God of Nature, whose beneficent gifts are all about us. He yearns to know the God who is evolved into human consciousness by and through the purity of heart and intelligence, by the virtues and winning excellencies of the best and noblest of mankind, as they typify and indicate the Divine Being in whom is sublimated and concreted all purity, intelligence, virtue, and excellence.

A sincere and honest man true to his own intelligence and conscience, be he white or black, a king or his poorest subject, can stand before his Maker with dignity, face to face, eye to eye, and say, "Am I not Thy child, am I not of Thy divine conception? Sincerely keeping my heart and conscience void of offense may I not, humbly, with a heart overflowing with gratitude, call Thee 'Father'!"

The character of God, I firmly believe,

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is shadowed forth in the character of a good and intelligent man.

I believe therefore in the existence of a high Power within the vastness of space in whom is combined the highest intelligence and the highest sentiments of the heart; such love and affection as our parents feel for their children. I believe that in the mind of this high Power originates all love, all disinterestedness, all justice. I believe He is the Author of all our precious family relations in life, and the Author also of fraternity in its widest sense, as between individuals, families, communities, states, and nations. I believe that He expresses Himself in all the harmonies and beauties of nature which are so wonderfully adapted by His fatherly care to man's needs and delight. My strong faith is in the perfect righteousness and goodness of God! I do not believe there exists in nature or in human life, as constituted, anything to justify us in an arraignment of the Power or Powers

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above the human! The governing laws and principles which we recognize in the manifestations of nature are all beneficent. The mass of mankind have thought and acted like badly made-up children respecting their relations with God; crying and begging, fearful or hopeful, troublesome toward each other, and demanding great patience from their Divine Parent.

We need a God who, in respect to the large family of man which covers our beautiful earth, stands in the same relation to all of us as kind parents stand in relation to their children. I believe firmly in the existence of such a God and Father of us all.

We need a new and grander religion to fit such a conception of God. Let us adopt for ourselves and teach our children a religion that honors God and sustains the dignity of man. The true religion is one of faith in an infinite Righteousness and Love and the working out of these principles of the Divine Nature in human life. Let us be vol-

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untarily grateful to that Life-giving and Life-sustaining Power which is revealed by Nature and by human experiences.

MAN'S POWERS AND DUTIES

REILIGION is the performance of all duties growing out of our relations with God. Morality is the performance of all duties growing out of our relations with our fellow-men and all other creatures.

While there is no merit in belief or disbelief respecting religious creeds and concerns, there is merit in the honest endeavor to arrive at truth by diligent examination and perseverance. To search for truth is a privilege and a duty, and the truths we are most interested to know are those concerning our true relations with God and with man.

Man's liberty and will are so great in this world, acting as he may individually or collectively, that he is justified in considering

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himself a power in the Universe; though no doubt comparatively a small one, still a power which justifies his taking a dignified position in his own estimation. Man is even a designer and creator, for he can create anything, from an earthen pitcher to a splendid palace or church edifice, provided always that his metals for making tools and building materials are furnished to him by a higher Power.

As man advances in knowledge, so will his power increase for good or for evil, as he may elect. With power to restrain himself, man is the author of all crime, and consequent misery in the world; with power to augment, man lessens the sum of human happiness. Man himself is the only obstructionist to progress in religion, in morals, in politics, in medicine. In the matter of what is called religion, man has used the great freedom of belief with which he is endowed to build up a false and libelous conception of God, and compel others by cruel persecutions to worship it. A sincere belief

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in, and conscientious observance of any form of religious belief seems to bring satisfaction and content to the average mind, whether or not that belief is in consonance with the real facts of nature and human life. We may doubt the truth of any system of worship that cannot weave into its service all truth of every science and department of human knowledge. The world and the universe are full of truth, but man must exercise his activities of mind to discover it. Man must solve all problems that interest himself. Now let us all be guided in our researches by reason and experience, and work out our own salvation from error and superstition which bear us down.

Natural and moral laws must be obeyed. Every man should be educated to understand, accept, and obey these laws. Man is endowed with liberty to think and study and learn these laws, and he is also endowed with liberty of action to obey them. He is finding out the justice and necessity of their

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existence by bitter experience, but he is endowed with liberty to so act as to place himself in harmony with these laws and ensure his well-being and happiness. He is learning how with care he may secure old age, and how by attention to the laws of heredity his children may be well constituted.

The influences which lead toward the recognition of the human reason as the supreme judge of what it is right and wise to believe and to do are increasing every day. We have newspapers and periodicals devoted to "establishing religion upon a scientific basis" and taking "truth for authority and not authority for truth."

I believe that we find the law of human conduct in the revelation of the will of God as made in the laws which govern man's nature. It is becoming almost universally accepted as a fundamental truth, that obedience to the laws of the moral nature constitutes virtue, and confers the happiness which alone follows upon virtue.

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Let us begin *now* the work of perfecting ourselves; for yesterday is gone from us and can only be useful to us by our memory of its experiences; to-morrow is not ours, and may never come, so to-day, this hour, is all we may call our own.

CONSCIENCE

F we could fashion a model or type of human character for the human race to imitate, would it not be a faint reflection of the character of the Power which exists above the human, with which every living thing upon this earth has relations?

It is through the exercise of the will that we progress or retrograde in our personal morality. There is another power in the human mind above even this great executive will; for in every human mind God has reserved for Himself a little field of influence which we call *conscience*. Conscience is the *ought* to which every human mind assents.

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Conscience is the embodiment of the law of right action.

There are heights and depths in the laws of mind which are less understood than in the laws of matter. In the laws of conscience, for instance, we are dependent upon education, and education depends upon circumstances which we create.

A good conscience is made up of sincerity and an earnest seeking for truth with all the understanding one can command.

Let us each and all cultivate in ourselves and in our children acquaintance with the God within us, the conscience which smiles or frowns upon us as we do right or wrong! The measure of our intimacy with God, the character of the principles which guide us, are shown by our daily life. If reason and love rule us, it will be revealed by acts of kindness, respect, and consideration toward our fellow-men. Let us all live near to God, the fountain of all the varied good in the world, and our best friend.

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JUSTICE

JO make up a fullness of character satisfying to ourselves we must keep alive in our minds the sense of justice to all mankind and to every living creature with whom we have relations.

Let it be the task of every religious organization, of every good man, to eliminate as fast as possible all the evil and injustice of the world from government and from society.

TRUTH

THIS FACT truly described, carefully defined with all its conditions, as it is the aim of a man of science to do, gives us a truth.

Truth is deduced by the human mind from the facts of life and experience, through study and reflection. The acquisitions of the individual mind can thus by the aid of philosophy be poured into the reservoirs of hu-

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man knowledge. And it is a wise and beautiful provision of human nature that to impart knowledge gives to the imparting mind a peculiar intellectual pleasure. To work out through the laboratory of the human mind a single truth, a single principle, not before discovered or fully appreciated by the world, raises the individual in his own estimation and gives him great happiness. Whether this be a physical, moral, or religious truth, it is all the same in its effect upon him who has deduced it: his satisfaction is measured only by the importance to the well-being of humanity of the idea or principle he has contributed to the common mind.

SYSTEMS OF RELIGION

EVERY intelligent human being requires and must have a religion! And the creed, belief, and general character of each and every religion corresponds with the supposed character of God, and the sup-

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posed nature of man's relation to God, at the time of its adoption.

If this world is not still in its infancy, at least it is not beyond the early period of its adolescence.

Using the precious privilege, freedom of thinking, let us examine sincerely and freely the grounds of all old beliefs and judge for ourselves of their value. To man's more or less evolved intelligence at every given period of human growth is left the ascertainment and teaching of religious as of other truths. To the power and extent of man's liberty and will everything good and desirable in the way of knowledge can be obtained.

Great advances have been made in physical science. Our general comfort and well-being are increasing through labor-saving inventions. Wonderful discoveries have been made by the human intellect. And yet the highest happiness and well-being of man depend more upon his religious and moral

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progress than upon the mechanical arts which give us leisure, food, and raiment. The needs of the mind are greater than the needs of the body.

To ascertain and perform our religious and moral duties will most of all conduce to our well-being and happiness in this world. But evolution is slow, and it may be many ages before the mind of man will clearly recognize his true relations with God and with his fellow-creatures.

The prevailing faith of one period of time has been rejected by the succeeding one, but in these changes there have been no abrupt transitions. One faith or system of religion has gradually dissolved into another like Daguerre's dissolving views.

Owing to the slowness of growth, and the often blurred views of religious matters which these changes give, it is hard for a young person often to know what to believe. Such should remember that true faith is born of real convictions, and that convictions of

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truth are always built up by patient investigation each one for himself. One should reflect as profoundly as possible upon the facts of life and history, add to these his own experience, and exercise his reason and common sense as in all other things.

The source of growth in religion, and the tests of its beauty and its use are in the intelligent mind and heart of the human race.

Religious sentiments should be based upon the noblest traits of human character; such as unselfishness, justice, charity, love of truth, honor in its true sense, and the whole train of real virtues.

Let us retain all of good and of truth which the ancient religions contain, and let us endeavor to eliminate all of the error.

When the prevailing ideas are generally modified by enlightened reason and common sense, there will be great increase in churches and congregations, and the glad tidings of a better religion than is generally known will be received by all with enthusiasm. I pro-

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pose a platform of religious toleration and pure morality upon which all can stand.

LEADERS OF THOUGHT

AS some trees in a forest dominate others in height and wide extent of branches, so in every age of the world there are a few men who rise in intellectual power above the masses and become conspicuous in various lines of thought and effort. The love of truth is stronger in these men than in the average of mankind, and they therefore seek with earnestness to winnow truth from the inherited errors of superstition. The leaders and advocates of any prevailing religion are strong in the power of organization. And this makes it difficult for any to doubt accepted theories, however superstitious, and renders it almost impossible for young persons to break away from the prevailing form of religious faith. But intelligent and honest investigators of strong mind doubt,

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as they must, and lead the way to transitions of growth. Philosophy and scientific truth are the results of mental research and knowledge of ascertained facts.

All true legitimate religion in the sense in which I have used the word must be acknowledged and endorsed by an intelligent philosophy, and must harmonize with all ascertained scientific truths. Unless this harmony with the most enlightened reason is secured, religion will always become not a true but a spurious system of faith, based upon ignorance and filled with superstition and leading to false notions of God and Duty.

As the sun enlightens and shines upon every portion of the habitable globe, so should a religion blended with morality exist that should irradiate and cheer the mind and heart of all mankind!

The truth, whatever it may be, should be the aim of all research and reasoning; and any religion which will not place the truth above all preconceived ideas will not suit the mod-

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ern mind. Truth is all known and verified fact. Is not the religion we are seeking for a religion of truth? Of course new truths will be constantly developed through the human mind by time and experience; and all new truths must be in turn added to those already accepted and taught, if our religion is to be kept pure.

Both religion and morality must recognize this important fact of the growth of the human mind through new discoveries of truth. And in the exercise of the religious principles which I hope to see initiated, the countenance and assent of the honest and thoughtful men of science will be by no means neglected.

Life from the hand of our Divine Father has always been “worth living” from the beginning until now. And it hardly can be called Utopian to anticipate that a time is coming when machinery will be perfected, when the fine arts will be followed more or less by all as interesting activities, when human laws

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supplementing and harmonizing with Divine right shall prevail, when cruel wars shall cease, and nations shall be governed in their relations to each other by reason and an enlightened conscience.

We look forward to a time when governments shall be administered upon the same principles of wisdom and justice which now rule the actions of cultivated and enlightened men and women. And above all we look forward to a time when a pure religion shall prevail, and the true God, our loving Father, shall be understood. Then life will be enjoyed by all. Health, cheap living, much leisure to look about the world will then be enjoyed. And our natural activities of mind and body may be exercised by all, in accordance with the individual bent of taste, innocently and harmoniously.

I would like to see a religious society established which would attach no merit to belief, or condemnation to unbelief; which would give to all the right of honest freedom of

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thought and individual conviction. These should be guaranteed to all. But since there is greater power for good in united than in isolated action, the ideal religious society would have a proper coincidence in object and sympathy of views, to give the force which unity commands.

To that end the new religion will, it seems to me, stand for the actuating principles which are the highest that can influence the human mind, namely: Gratitude to God and a high principle of honor toward God and man. These two principles powerfully influence us toward obedience to the laws of nature, moral and physical. These laws of nature shadow forth the character of God, and the wise and good man is the highest manifestation of that wise and beneficent influence which permeates all nature. Such principles of gratitude and honor dignify and ennable man and lead to the highest perfection of his own nature. The professed doctrines of a religious society should raise a

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man in his own estimation, not degrade and belittle him. They should teach a man who honestly does the best he knows, to respect and honor himself. To be good and intelligent is to live near to God; and such a man, whatever his religious belief, can raise his eyes and address the spirit of intelligence and goodness and say, "Oh God, I thank Thee that Thou hast constituted man able to feebly reflect in his character Thy own perfections. And I thank Thee that Thou hast given man power to grow ever toward perfection."

CREEDS

DE^T us search for the truth! Let us not cry aloud that we have it, unless we can furnish ample proof of its genuineness. Let us not adulterate it with dogmatic opinions, and let us be careful not to mix with it much of faith and personal conviction which have chief value only in individual use. Truth should be demonstrated like a

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fact of science, something always admitted, never contested. A truth is never discordant with right reason.

Every man's convictions should be stamped by his own reason and best judgment and packed away in his memory ticketed with the reasons for his faith. But personal beliefs should have a basis of sound reason.

And all convictions supposed to be true, are likely to be modified; for in the evolution of thought there are no finalities. The data of science, philosophy, and religion are constantly changing with the onward progress of the human mind.

No man can therefore conceive of any advance or amelioration in science, morals, or religion that his own study has enabled him to make, which another man wiser and better than he may not improve upon! Each and every age is entitled to the advantage which the crop of its experience gives to it; and man in every age is entitled to the fresh

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thought which experience, reflection, and science ripen into wisdom, as fruit is ripened by the sunshine, showers, and time.

Our creed should be made up of true principles of right thinking and right conduct, and I see no objection to noting down in the form of constitutional principles, or a creed of beliefs, the honest convictions of to-day by those who would form a Religious Society. Why cannot all stand on a platform of the truest and noblest principles that the head and heart can conceive of in our day and generation? We may do this and yet admit that there is nothing now conceived in science, morals, and religion which may not in time be improved upon.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF
RELIGION

HE HAVE for years believed that the time has now come to lay the foundations of a new religion materially modified

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from all existing systems of popular faith. I believe that as the human mind matures by the exercise of reflection, and through collective experience, the inevitable changes which result in our religious convictions should be embodied in religious organizations, whose creeds or modified statements of guiding principles harmonize with other forms of mental evolution.

I believe that the perfection of mankind physically and mentally as well as morally is the end to be attained in religion. All progress and experience tend slowly toward that end.

In true religion every moral duty is comprised. I hope that in the Society which I desire to help form, the great principles of justice, kindness, and a reasonable charity to all may be recognized, taught, and practised.

I desire to form a Religious Society which can say, "We are inside all the religions of the world, in every truthful princi-

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ple which any other system of religion inculcates! And we are outside every belief and principle of any religious system which underestimates the character of God and lessens the true dignity of Humanity."

We believe that the statement and exercise of the highest known principles of a given age is the way to bring about natural evolution toward a higher state of morals and better conceptions of religious duty.

We should have no desire to diminish in any sect the religious sentiment or devotional spirit; far otherwise! We should aim to increase and purify this spirit of devotion by presenting a truer object of inspiration, and by giving sound reasons for the cultivation of the religious sentiment.

We believe in the existence of a Power other and immeasurably higher than the human, whose character, as manifested by the phenomena of nature and human life, is wise and good.

We believe that while the human mind

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is not constituted to comprehend a beginning of things, we may comprehend the character of a living and sustaining Power working through unchanging laws to the end of the well-being and happiness of every organized being on this earth from man downward.

Being endowed with reason, with a natural sense of justice, with moral consciousness which enables us to distinguish between good and evil, we can know and appreciate our own character and that of others. And this same basis of judgment we must depend upon in estimating the character of the Power above the human. No “persistent force,” no mere *power*, would justify our homage and worship. There must be a high moral quality to justly win our adoration; and no teachings of any religion justify us in worshipping a God inferior in moral traits to the highest human character. Hence we would use our perception and appreciation of the best in

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man and woman as the revelation and faint type of the perfections of God.

We believe that to man is given large measure of liberty, so that he is enabled acting individually and collectively to create circumstances, to be virtuous or vicious, and that to this endowment of liberty or free-will is attached responsibility for the effects of his action, whether those effects be good or evil.

We believe that man is subject to the operation of unchangeable laws of God, which, founded in wisdom and goodness, man has no power to modify or change. And we believe the intelligent man is wise enough to perceive that these laws of God are in harmony with his own well-being and happiness.

We believe that all things are related to one another, and that man is related nearly to God as to a Divine Father. And a study of the relations of all organized existences to each other, and of all creatures to God, has given us the conviction that God greatly

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considers and cares for all that He has created. We believe that our relations to God being of this filial character demand of us a recognition of His existence and acknowledgment of our gratitude to Him for His gifts to us.

Recognizing the fact of our own existence in nature, we should assume as a starting-point in religious faith, justified by reason, the existence of a wise and good God, the Giver of life.

Recognizing it for truth that relations exist between us and this Higher Power, between each individual and his family and his neighbor, his community, his country, and the world of mankind, and recognizing that these relations involve activities for the effects of which we are responsible whether they be good or evil, we would assert our determination to be guided by the highest rules of action toward God and toward our fellow-man.

We would aim at nothing less than the
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perfection of the human race in physical, mental, and moral well-being. And we believe that man, possessed of liberty within the bounds of the laws of nature, has the power to perfect himself. We believe that the acme of man's privilege is the enjoyment of ever living nearer to God; and we *would* live nearer to Him.

Let us adopt a religion so simple, so reasonable, and so in harmony with the dignity of both God and man, that all can exercise and share in it! On the simple and great principles of acknowledgment of the existence of God and gratitude to Him, and devotion to duty, we trust that the devotees of every existing religion may harmoniously unite.

We would be honest in our expressions of convictions of right, and earnest in guiding by them our own actions. To further these ends we would consecrate a temple to God, to Truth, and to all that dignifies and ennobles Humanity.

THOUGHTS ON RELIGION
CONCERNING CHILDREN AND
THEIR RIGHTS

UNDER the holy bonds of Matrimony we invite our children to exist. Every child has a natural right to be born under happy circumstances, and none but healthy and mutually harmoniously constituted parents should dare invite a child into existence. Every child has a right to possess a good healthy constitution. It is for man to use his freedom and will in all wisdom in regard to the existence and perpetuation of the race.

Children not only have the right to be well born, but to be well brought up; to be kept abreast of the best development of their time in all things. Parents are the natural guardians and instructors of their children, and to teach all the truth they have perceived is to perform a high duty.

Our children should be trained to exercise every magnanimous sentiment and to be guided by such early in life. We should

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form the minds of our children ; train them up as you would a young plant to the observance of the best we ourselves know.

That the intelligent apprehension of religion and the growth of a true religion may become universal, we must secure for all human kind, children as well as adults, perfect liberty in thinking.

What greater service can we render to our children than to teach them to think for themselves. After teaching our children the best we know, we must leave them as they develop into the reflecting and reasoning period of life, to be guided by the divine principles of freedom and responsibility. Let us reason with children in advocacy of what we believe is best and true, but let children reflect and reason also, let them examine and decide in accordance with their own honest convictions. Since new light and truth in regard to God and religion are being constantly evolved, may we all keep our minds receptive to new light.

THOUGHTS ON RELIGION
ON THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
OF CHILDREN

BELOWE believe in establishing Sunday schools. I would embrace in the teaching of such schools the whole duty of man; religious, moral, and political; and also such teaching as would tend toward success in life in pecuniary matters. I would teach children to do unto others as they would feel it right for others in like circumstances to do unto them. And I would also teach them to rely as much as possible on themselves, and not on others for their material well-being in this world.

The most effective method of sustaining any system of thought or religion is organization, which includes the teaching of children by all parents and teachers what is esteemed by them to be the truth. I believe that the truths and deductions of reason taught to children should be advanced by the teacher in a spirit of humility and deference to the

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possibility and even probability of a future gradual change in the human mind which will modify present conceptions. The parent and teacher are bound to give the child what seem to them the most advanced and the truest thoughts of the ages. The child has a claim on the parent and teacher for this, and nothing more can be given sincerely. And the pupil has a right to inquire of his teacher by what evidence he has arrived at the results he seeks to impart. Truth, wherever it actually exists, is the product of facts; and that teacher is to be condemned who seeks to inspire a faith in any statement which he cannot or will not attempt to justify by the facts and evidences which have affected his own mind.

CONSECRATION OF A CHILD

DIVINE Father. We would gratefully acknowledge that through Thy power and goodness we exist. Thou art be-

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hind all of goodness, intelligence, and well-being that we enjoy. All are born of Thee, and in ushering us into this beautiful world, Thou hast provided all that is needed for our welfare. The mother in her tender care and love for her offspring acts as Thy honored agent, for Thou hast constituted her loving nature to represent Thy love and will. The smile of the infant upon its mother is Thy smile of encouragement given through the infant, infusing into her mind the joy that mothers feel in the well-being of their children. . . .

Kind Father, we voluntarily bind ourselves to the exercise of our own best intelligence to educate and advance the happiness of this child, whom Thou hast confided to our care and affection.

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NON-SECTARIAN TEACHING IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

No our Public Schools, to which the children of various denominations are sent, no peculiar views of morality and religion taught by any particular sect should be permitted to predominate. For by favoring the views of one sect the teacher would unjustly ignore those of other sects, and all have equal rights. What then of morality and religion may be taught in our Public Schools with justice to all? Only those principles of truth and right which are common to all sects and religions.

A MANLY PLEDGE IN REGARD TO WOMAN

BY the memory of my mother, whom God appointed my loving guardian through infancy, and who loved me through life, I solemnly promise that I will never

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do harm to any woman. The mental and physical constitution of woman, in many ways superior to that of man, makes her naturally dependent upon him in some respects, and leads her naturally to confide in him; and I hereby pledge my honor never to cheat or deceive a woman in any way, but to do all in my power to prevent her being cheated or deceived by others. By the love and respect I bear my mother, my sister, my wife, and my daughter, I will endeavor to keep this sacred promise made before God and these witnesses.

ANIMALS

LEET us remember that the lower animals are specially under our protection as they are under our control.

The domesticated animal is helpless and innocent as a child. He is created submissive and gentle toward man that he may serve

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him, and how base and wicked it is to abuse that humble gentleness.

And whereas God in giving us dominion for our use and pleasure over innocent and defenseless animals, has confided in our justice and consideration toward them that they shall be treated kindly and in accordance with their comfort and well-being, to act thus toward all lower animals is a positive duty, growing out of our relations with God, as well as with these animals, since to treat them unkindly would be to prove ourselves unworthy of the confidence God has placed in us.

We believe in the divine influence of intelligence and nobility of mind and of the unselfish emotions of the heart, wherever found, whether in man, or in higher or lower grades of existence.

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TEMPERANCE

TEET us never forget that the power accorded to man by God to do wrong does not comprise the right to do wrong. The principle of justice as applied to all is higher than the power of free action.

Mankind is a solidarity, and what injures one injures all: hence our laws should be such as will ensure the well-being of each and all in the community.

EACH SHARES WITH ALL

NO man can be happy without imparting a share of happiness to others; no man can be miserable without reflecting a portion of his misery upon others. Hence, let us cultivate happiness and root out misery, as we would a poisonous weed, from the world! And as a fond parent is delighted with the indications of intelligence in his child, so we may imagine God to be pleased

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with man's gradual advancement in the sciences, in the arts, and in all things which contribute to our well-being and happiness!

TO GOD WE OWE THE GREAT GIFT OF LIFE

BY no guiding principle of right or justice known among men has man any claim whatever to existence and the happiness that life may comprise. Life is a free gift to man, from a high Power existing antecedent to man's advent to this world! So we are of Divine origin. Life is costless to us but priceless! The conception of man's existence with all its accessorial accompaniments could only originate in a high concreted Wisdom and Goodness; to fully appreciate which no man or woman can fully aspire, though man may in his best state of perfection faintly comprehend and typify in his own life the divine character. There are those who unjustly deprecate the

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value of life by the inquiry, “Is life worth living?” There is no doubt of the unequal value of life to babes who receive it, but we must not forget that the parents themselves create or furnish the conditions of health and well-being or otherwise, under which we are all born. So that man, himself, and not God, is responsible for the inequalities of birth symbolized by the “silver spoon” and “wooden ladle.” The power, the gift of life is from God; the conditions under which we are born are created by man and appertain to his liberty of will. At all events, life costs nothing! And be it of more or less value, all should accept and cherish it with grateful hearts.

Let us vindicate the ways of God to man! God is not responsible for the crimes of humanity. Be grateful to and trust in God!

AND MORALITY

GRATITUDE TO GOD

UR gratitude to God is proved by our disinterested courtesy, justice, and reasonable kindness to each other. Since God is manifested in others, as in ourselves and in all living creatures, we may come face to face with the great Power that animates all Nature. And reason may be likened to a spark of the intelligence of God Himself.

IMMORTALITY

N spite of the fact that the death of the individual seems to end his consciousness, a large number of the most intelligent class of men believe in the immortality of their own consciousness. They believe that each mind will carry with it into the next world its own bundle of experiences, memories, and beliefs; all in fact that makes it a distinct entity.

We cannot, however, teach as a positive

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truth the immortality of individual consciousness after death, for we have no facts or evidence that would justify such dogmatic teaching upon this subject. We cannot even teach the immortality of the race of mankind in the sense that theologians apply the idea to individuals of the race, for the only home of the race is on this earth.

If it should be proved that death ends all, rightly viewed the law of unconsciousness or death would be seen to be as divine in its conception as the law of birth and consciousness. For all laws are part and parcel of the same contriving wisdom. And since an unconscious body cannot be conscious of its own dissolution, the living alone suffer pain and regret at the extinction of a human life. If it should be proved that the whole story of the life of a human being should be "from the dust to the dust," with the beautiful episode of life between, we could not complain. For the consciousness which in that case death would place us in we were, before our birth,

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placed in also; that is, we were unorganized before our birth as we may be disorganized at death. Therefore we would be left precisely where we were found, an unconscious part of the great whole. And those who claim we have a *right* to personal immortality might as well set up the claim that the Great Power is guilty of an injustice in permitting so many aeons of time to elapse before each individual who lives now was organized into personality. We have just as much right to claim existence through the past ages as in the eternity which is to follow our little lives.

There exists no evidence that a sensible and thoughtful mind can accept as *proof* that we shall live after death with our present consciousness of existence. Well, what if there does not? This affords us a fine chance of trusting in God that our birth being so great a blessing, our death, coming from the same kind Power, cannot be a great misfortune! Let us each be cheerful and trustful to the end, for who knows but our Divine

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Father has arranged an agreeable surprise for us at the end as at the beginning of this earthly life?

He who gave us life gave us death! Coming from the same beneficent source why, if we realize that life is good, should we imagine that death is bad? Trust that Power whom we designate as God! Fear no event that God ordains must happen. Fear not death. The same wise and beneficent Power that gave you birth presides equally at your death. Trust in God!

SELECTED THOUGHTS

SELECTED THOUGHTS

MAN is a recipient of God's bounty. To enjoy life rationally and fully is to further God's will and intent.

The laws of nature are the laws of God.

All scientific truth is knowledge of God and His ways of wisdom and kindness. The truths of science and religion perfectly accord.

Let us do our duty to God from a principle of honor because it is right. Not from fear of punishment or hope of reward.

Praise and acknowledgments not prayer. Let us not say "Give us"! But rather "Thou hast given us."

Man being free and sovereign creates circumstances and is responsible for error and crime.

SELECTED THOUGHTS

The infant smiles not upon its mother, but
God smiles through the infant.

Let us consecrate a temple to God, to truth,
and humanity.

The intelligent and good live near to God.

Involution before evolution, a thinking
power higher and nobler than humanity
exists behind all and through all.

Let us cherish the courtesies and amenities
of life.

The performance of our highest duties is
our highest privilege. Give us a true and
manly religion that covers the whole field
of duty to God and Humanity.

Given a fair and equal chance, the grass of
truth will cut out the weeds of error.

SELECTED THOUGHTS

No sacrifice or worship can be acceptable to God that does not promote the happiness of mankind.

Be grateful to and trustful in God.

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